

VHBC

connections

THE SABBATICAL OF MS. NANCY

2023 was a great year for conferences, retreats, and more for our favorite children's minister.

DAYTREAT SUCCESS

See a snapshot of events from one of our favorite times of year!

February 6, 2024
Vestavia Hills Baptist Church

We love our teachers!

Let's share a word of appreciation to our weekly preschool & children's teachers and support team! Send a note, share a hug, write on a heart in the Children's Foyer!

Sandra Bates	Marie Gwathney	Carolyn Slappey
Dick Bodenhamer	Meredith Hankins	Lisa Speegle
Gay Caldwell	Jenny Henry	Jennifer Stembidge
Dan Caldwell	Matt Hutcheson	Kathryn Stewart
Jennifer Carter	Billie Lochamy	Betsy Stockdale
Gilda Coker	Dave McPherson	Kim Virciglio
Merryl Cooper	Nancy Akins	Karyn Watts
Jan Deagon	Sara Nix	Emily White
Janice Fleming	Sam Nordlund	
Leigh Gwathney	Jerolyn Phillips	

AROUND THE CHURCH

CONTENTS OF
THIS WEEK'S
VHBC CONNECTIONS

THIS WEEK

Find out where you and your family need to be at the church this week!

PERMANENT ENDOWMENT FUND

Grants being received now! Read more about the deadline and when the grants will be presented.

GRATITUDE FROM NANCY

Read about some of the stories from Ms. Nancy's 2023 sabbatical!

LENT BEGINS NEXT WEEK

Mark your calendars for important dates and read about special resources during this special time on the calendar.

MILES COLLEGE

The Golden Voices Ensemble from the Miles College Choir performed on Wednesday, January 24th in the sanctuary. Our own VHBC choir sang a arrangement of Psalm 145.



REFLECTIONS AFTER RETREAT

A LETTER FROM NANCY AKINS

Dear friends,

In 2023, you graciously granted me a sabbatical. Here is an overview of the year and a few takeaways from the experience.

My sabbatical included:

- Attending a conference here in Birmingham
- Participating in a personal retreat in Georgia with Terri Byrd
- Spending five days at the beach!
- Visiting four churches in Huntsville, the Atlanta area, and Augusta, GA
- Attending the Children's Pastor Conference in Orlando, FL

A conference on a new-to-me teaching method was a good reminder of the importance of children holding, opening, and reading from a Bible. Knowing the biblical stories of faith come from a book called the Bible helps children know where to find the stories. Using the Bible teaches this book is a handbook, a guide for God's plan for you and me. To learn the rich stories of people throughout the Bible teaches how to be a Christ follower. His way is good and gives us hope. Holding, opening, and reading from the Bible is necessary. Want to know how I was reminded? The method demonstrated **excluded** the Bible. The Bible was in the room but not used when telling the story. I was perplexed and did not become the teacher's favorite by saying "Where is your Bible?"

As for my personal retreat...I am not a 'personal retreat' person but our beloved Terri Byrd, now on staff at John's Creek Baptist, led me through a wonderful weekend of reflection. I spent a few nights at Ignatius House in Roswell, GA and then spent time with Terri and Paul, her husband, another beloved VHBC friend. We ate well, talked, laughed, and welcomed the deer in their backyard. Spending time together fed my soul.

The trip to the beach: ahhhhh. The ocean. The restorative nature of the ocean is one I cherish.

Visiting other churches was incredibly enjoyable and beneficial. What was my biggest takeaway? People! Friendly and intentional people in strategic places outside and inside the building (and all during the time at church) are key! *Intentional people throughout the church*, at dinner, in hallways, in classrooms, before, during, and after worship is vital for helping everyone find *a place of belonging and purpose*. *We all want a place to belong, no matter what that looks like for each person*. During my days at Southern seminary, I hung on to every word of Kathryn Chapman. Dr. Chapman was the childhood education professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1978 until her death in 1998. She drilled into us the concept of INTENTIONALITY. Being intentional in the ways of welcoming, including, teaching, loving, and learning together at church are all important. We move outside ourselves to the needs of others. We help others find a place of belonging and purpose in this place we know as church. And we help one another walk in the days of faith and hope.

The last of my sabbatical was enjoyed at the Children's Pastors Conference in Orlando, FL where I attended well-led and meaningful sessions on VBS, reaching children from hard places, and reaching families who no longer find church as a place for their family.

All through the past year I met many excellent children's ministers, learned some new ways of doing things and was affirmed in so much we do. I reflected on the *whats and whys* of what we do in children's ministry and throughout our church.

Please know of my sincerest gratitude to our staff and children's ministry leadership for not skipping a beat during my absences. No surprise! Thank you, my beloved church, for providing this wonderful opportunity of sabbatical to me.

Most sincerely,
Nancy Akins



VOLUNTEERS

February 11, 2024

Worship Care

Tracey Towns, Merryl Cooper, Mary Grace Cox, Shawn Owens, Anna Claire Bailey, Taylor Davis, Jay McFarland

Transportation Team

Mike Craddock
Craig Youngblood

Worship Tech Team

Norfleete Day
Brent Warren

Welcome Team

Joe Perez, George Elliott, Cappy Blackwelder, Dan Caldwell, Lisa Speegle, Sharon Repp, Jason Cooper

Deacons of the Week

Steve White
Brent Warren

Flowers/Decor Team

Mary Cherry
Becky Best

Counting Team

Charles Evans
Harry Harden



February 18, 2024

Worship Care

Billie Lochamy, Mindy Bodenhamer, Lisa Speegle, Jennifer Binet, Jennifer Carter, Laura Tadlock, Dick Bodenhamer

Transportation Team

Scott Phillips
Abbey Donze

Worship Tech Team

Lilie VanGiessen
Dan VanGiessen

Welcome Team

Joe Perez, George Elliott, Cappy Blackwelder, Dan Caldwell, Lisa Speegle, Sharon Repp, Jason Cooper

Deacons of the Week

Elise Alexander
Brandon Bates

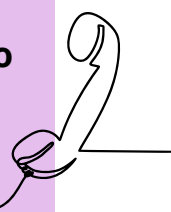
Flowers/Decor Team

Carolyn Slappey

Counting Team

Hunter Hill
Rachel Jordan

A call for teachers! We need a few good substitutes to call up when our Adult Bible study leadership needs support. We need you! Contact laura@vhbc.com if you like to be on our SUB Teacher List. I look forward to hearing from you!





PREPARING FOR THE SEASON OF LENT

The sacred season of Lent begins with the observance of Ash Wednesday. The forty days (excluding Sundays) leading up to Easter allow us time to reflect and prepare for a glorious resurrection celebration. Ashes in the shape of a cross mark worshipers and remind us our own mortality and symbolize our penitence.

VHBC invites you to stop by the church on Wednesday

morning, February 14th between 7-8:30 am for our Drive-Thru Ashes. Signs will guide you along Shades Crest Rd. and Beaumont Dr. up to the front entrance of the building where our ministers will lead in the imposition of ashes on each participant.

Return after work or school that evening for an Ash Wednesday service at 6 pm in the sanctuary.

DRIVE-THRU
ASHES
WEDNESDAY

VESTAVIA HILLS
BAPTIST CHURCH
2600 VESTAVIA DR. 35216

FEB
14TH
7:00-
8:30AM

www.vhbc.com/events

DURING LENT AT VHBC & HOME

Starting next Wednesday

Opportunities during Lent will be offered on Wednesday evenings for adults:

Hope in the Wilderness

A 4-week study from February 21 through March 13 will be led by Noel Forlini Burt, coordinator of the Preministerial Scholars at Samford.

Hope in the Wilderness urges you to consider that your wilderness experiences—places where you suffer deeply, places where you can't find or feel God anymore, places of transition and upending of the life you used to know—are the very places where God speaks to your heart.

Enneagram

A 3-week study from February 21 until March 6th led by Jess & Sara Nix.

Just in time for Lent, join the Nixes in studying the Enneagram, an ancient personality profile system. Learn about your unconscious motivations to act, how you change in stress and health, and how different sides of your personality emerge as we age. It will be a fun & enlightening series!

Contemplative Prayer

Our prayer group on Wednesdays is an ongoing group led by George Van Kirk in the Chapel at 6 pm.

On the next page is a terrific resource for your family to use during Lent.

This Lenten Spiral will guide you, your family, and your community through the Season of Lent with activities, questions, and inspiring nature walks. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 14, the Lenten Spiral takes you through the 40 days of Lent, including Sundays, culminating on Easter Sunday.

Spirals, a naturally occurring pattern, appear when things are in a state of growth and expansion. These spirals can be followed inward and outward, serving as a guide to mark one's personal and spiritual journey through Lent.

The Verse of the Week provides the foundation for the rest of the week's activities.

Friday Family Conversations will offer questions to discuss with your family.

Saturday Nature Walks are times to escape the walls of our houses and breathe deeply using suggested ways to connect to nature.

Sunday Feast Days are days we celebrate that nothing we do will separate us from the love of God. Use the suggestion provided, or choose another way to feast!

The Lenten Spiral sheets can also be picked up in the Children's Foyer. All ages are welcome to participate!

1

ASH WEDNESDAY:
Read Ecclesiastes 3:20. Make the sign of the cross in some soil. "From (star) dust you came, and to (star) dust you will return."

2

You were created from the same stardust that swirls around in the galaxy! Make a fingerprint stamp with washable markers and observe your unique spirals.

3

FAMILY CONVERSATION:
Spirals appear where things grow or shrink. Where do you notice spirals around you?

4

NATURE WALK:
Go for a walk. How many things can you find with a spiral?

5

SUNDAY FEAST DAY:
Celebrate the spirals all around us. Make something with a spiral for breakfast.

6

READ MARK 1:10.
Drink a glass of water and let it nourish you.

7

Find or create a small body of water. Toss in a pebble and watch the ripples.

8

Make a coffee filter butterfly. Color a white coffee filter with markers, spray it a few times with water, and wrap the middle with a pipe cleaner.

9

Time how long it takes you to shower. See if you can beat your time to conserve water next time.

10

FAMILY CONVERSATION:
What is your favorite activity with water? How can we help protect and take care of water on Earth?

11

NATURE WALK:
Take a container of water with you on your walk. Offer water to any growing thing that looks thirsty.

12

READ MARK 9:7.
Imagine how God's voice would sound coming from the sky calling you "Beloved."

SUNDAY FEAST DAY:
The Holy Spirit moves all around us in mysterious ways. Make your favorite warm drink and watch the steam dance.

13

You are a star! Trace this star and stop at each point to say something you love about yourself.

25

Practice moving your body in a new way. Find a video leading you through some yoga exercises.

26

Draw a self-portrait and hang it in your room!

27

FAMILY CONVERSATION:
What part of your body do you use the most and why?

28

NATURE WALK:
Practice moving in new ways on your nature walk. Walk backward, take big lunge steps, walk on your tippy-toes, etc. Your body is amazing!

29

READ JOHN 12:24.
Act out the life cycle of a plant.

30

Select a fallen leaf and make an imprint by placing a blank piece of paper on top of the leaf and rubbing the side of a crayon over the top.

31

Plant a seed. Water it and check on it each day to watch it grow!

32

Research how trees are necessary for humans to breathe. Brainstorm ways to protect our environment, especially the trees.

33

FAMILY CONVERSATION:
Imagine a world without flowers. What would you miss the most?

34

NATURE WALK:

On your walk, collect items to create a nature collage.

35

READ MARK 11:2.

Listen for one minute outside. What animals did you hear?

22

NATURE WALK:

Animals need rest, too. On your walk, what places of rest do you notice for the animals in your environment?

21

FAMILY CONVERSATION:

Why does God want us to rest? Would you rather be a bear and hibernate all winter or a bird that migrates to a warmer climate?

36

READ

about an animal you don't know much about. What did you learn?

37

God created so many animals. Imagine and draw a new animal. Be sure to give it a name!

SUNDAY FEAST DAY:

When you make bread, the dough needs to rest before you bake it. Pick a bread recipe to make with your family.

38

Play the alphabet game with a friend or family member. Think of an animal that starts with each letter in the alphabet.

LENTEN SPiral

From (star) dust you came, and to (star) dust you will return.

20

Research what happens in your body when you sleep. How many hours of sleep do you need each night?

19

Rest is important for everyone. Ask an adult if you can do something for them so they can rest, too.

39

FAMILY CONVERSATION:

If you could be any animal, what would it be and why? What do you know about endangered species, and how can we help?

24

God created all things—even us. Learn something new about your body and give thanks for ways our bodies help us that we don't think about.

23

READ PSALM 107:21. Share one thing you're grateful for about your body.

18

This week, we are reminded of the importance of rest. Make yourself a cozy rest nest out of blankets, pillows, stuffies, etc.

40

NATURE WALK: Find and observe an insect for one minute. What did you notice? Do this three times on your walk.

17

READ EXODUS 20:11. Choose a way to rest today: take a nap, meditate, go to bed early, etc.

15

FAMILY CONVERSATION: If you could fly, where is the first place you would go? What would the world look like below you?

SUNDAY FEAST DAY:

Make sugar cookie dough. Use a cookie cutter or your hands to make star or cloud shapes.

16

NATURE WALK:

Check the weather report before your walk. Will it be cloudy, rainy, hot, cold? On your walk, make your own weather report.

EASTER SUNDAY

Easter morning is a time of celebration! Celebrate with a dance party because nature loves to spin and dance. Whirl, swirl, and twirl with nature and Mary as she heard Jesus' voice that first Easter morning. (John 20:16)

14

Look up different constellations. Which one is your favorite? Which ones have you seen?



SUNDAYS AT VHBC

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY 8:45 AM

Find our Welcome Team in the main foyer if you need assistance looking for a class for you and your family.

Children's Sunday School meets in the Children's Building. Please sign your child in at the front reception desk.

WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY 10 AM

Worship guides and hymn sheets are available at the sanctuary entrances.

If you are unable to worship in person with us, please join us online or over the radio at 91.1 FM.

Worship Care for babies through Kindergarten begins at 9:45 am.

YOUTH ON SUNDAY EVENING 5 PM

All youth meet in the Student Building to play games, listen to a devotion, and prepare for the upcoming week.
(During the Fall/Spring)

VHBC

YOUTH

Youth Minister Search

The youth minister search committee will give a search update to youth and parents during the Sunday morning Bible study hour on February 25th. If you are interested in hearing a more detailed update from the committee and asking questions, this is a great opportunity.

YOSE Night Out

Throughout the spring, we will have YOSE Night Out once-a-month to get out of the student building and do some fun activities around Birmingham together. First YNO will be 2/25, location TBA!

Coming up at VHBC Youth

- 2/7: WNL in the student building
- 2/11: Bible study at 9 am & Game Party to watch Chiefs & Niners at the Bates' house from 5-8 pm
- 2/14: Ash Wednesday service at 6 pm
- 2/16: Building Hope in Auburn
- 2/18: Bible study at 9 am; No YOSE

vhbc boys' basketball



Our VHBC youth basketball team are playing in the playoffs, starting tonight! Let's support our guys!

Upcoming games:

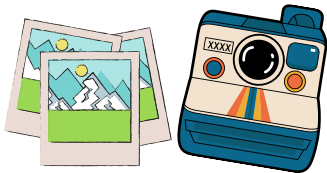
Tonight! 6 pm at Dawson Recreational Facility vs. Dawson (Round 1 of the Playoffs)

THIS WEEK



MORE
AT
VHBC

Join us this Wednesday night, **February 7th** for the conclusion of Gary Furr's Gospel Snapshot in the Fellowship Hall.



This Friday, **February 9th**, SAM (Senior Adult Ministry) invites you to their *Souper Bowl Game Day* in the Fellowship Hall from 10 am until 12:30 pm. Bring a snack and get ready to play some great board or card games!



This Sunday morning, **February 11th**, Second Sunday Pancakes is back in the Children's Activity Room at 8:45 am!



WED. NIGHT MEALS IN FEB

7th: Sloppy Joes, Sweet Potato Fries, Cole Slaw, & a Cookie

14th: Roasted Ancho Chicken & Apricot Salsa Herb Rice, French Onion Drop Biscuit, Chocolate Truffle Cake

21st: Cubano Sandwich, Black Bean Soup, & Key Lime Pie

28th: Pan Seared Turkey Patty, Mac & Cheese, Lady Peas, Cornbread Muffin, & Dessert

Reserve your plate online at
vhbc.com/dinneratvhbc

Adults: \$7

Children: \$5

Preschoolers: Free

College Students: Free

VHBC Permanent Endowment Fund

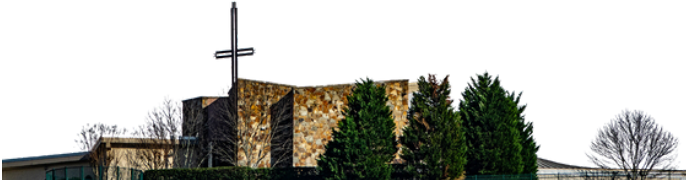
The Permanent Endowment Fund of VHBC was established in 2018 to provide members and friends of our church an opportunity to make lifetime and testamentary gifts that would become a permanent endowment for our ministries. Supported by estate and lifetime gifts, the fund makes annual grants for important mission engagements, ministries, and capital needs that might not otherwise be fully funded through our general budget. Since its inception, our endowment fund has made grants of over \$115,000.

During the month of February, the endowment fund committee is receiving requests for grants from staff members, committee chairs, and ministry leaders. The deadline for grant requests is Sunday, March 3. The grants will be presented during the worship service on Anniversary Sunday, May 5.

If you are ready to invest in our church's future, contact the church financial office. You can secure help and more info in a personalized confidential manner from Mike McBrayer and Jamie Ambrose.

VHBC *connections*

2600 Vestavia Drive
Vestavia Hills, Alabama 35216 www.vhbc.com
A Bi-weekly Newsletter for
Vestavia Hills Baptist Church



Ministry Staff

Nancy Akins	Minister to Preschool & Children
Sara Binet	Interim Student Coordinator
Mike McBrayer	Administrative Pastor
Dr. Eric Spivey	Senior Pastor
Laura Tadlock	Senior Adult & Adult Ministries Coordinator
Marty Watts	Minister of Music & Worship

THANK YOU!

Daytreat 2024 was a wonderful day of Togetherness! A **BIG** thank you to all those that served, volunteered, decorated, facilitated groups, participated in worship, and entertained us at Daytreat 2024! And thanks to all that came to fellowship, share meals, worship, and play together! Daytreat was a great way to start the year and your participation made it possible.

